

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 HA-02 NSC-05 INR-05 CIAE-00
NSAE-00 H-01 L-01 SP-02 PRS-01 /042 W
-----077658 170759Z /12
R 161830Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7503
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 10068

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E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PINT, IT, CI
SUBJECT: ITALIAN EMBASSY ASYLEE GONZALEZ

REF: SANTIAGO 8119 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: DURING THIS PAST WEEK I HAVE DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM OF RAFAEL GONZALEZ AND HIS FAMILY WITH DIRECTOR GENERAL JAIME LAVIN OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND WITH MR. GONZALEZ' SISTER. ON BOTH OCCAISIONS I STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE THAT WE ATTACH TO FINDING A WAY FOR THE GONZALEZ FAMILY TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. END SUMMARY.

2. I TOOK THE OCCASION OF A COURTESY CALL ON LAVIN DECEMBER 12 TO REITERATE OUR INTEREST IN GONZALEZ. THE CONTEXT WAS A MORE GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE ATTITUDES OF INFLUENTIAL SECTORS OF US OPINION REGARDING CHILE. I NOTED THAT IN ADDITION TO THE LONG-STANDING EXECUTIVE BRANCH INTEREST IN FINDING A WAY FOR MR. GONZALEZ AND FAMILY TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY THERE WAS ALSO SUBSTANTIAL CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST. I REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO CONGRESSMAN FASCELL. WHEN LAVIN REFERRED TO THE ESTABLISHED GOC BELIEF THAT GONZALEZ IS UNSTABLE AND MIGHT SAY THINGS THAT WOULD HARM CHILE ONCE HE IS OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY, I POINTED OUT, CONFIDENTIAL

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IF TRUE, HE WOULD THEN QUICKLY DISCREDIT HIMSELF AND THAT IN ANY EVENT THE GOC HAD TO ASSESS WHETHER LETTING HIM LEAVE WOULD BE MORE HARMFUL THAN THE PRESENT POLICY OF, IN EFFECT, KEEPING HIM IMPRISONED IN THE ITALIAN EMBASSY. I MENTIONED A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR CASE IN PARAGUAY THAT HAD BEEN WORKED OUT FINALLY TO THE BENEFIT OF ALL.

3. ON DECEMBER 15, THE SISTER OF RAFAEL GONZALEZ CAME TO SEE ME. THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR ESCORTED HER TO MY OFFICE BUT SHE THEN ASKED THAT WE TALK PRIVATELY. AS SOON AS WE WERE ALONE SHE PRODUCED A CASSETTE RECORDER AND PLAYED ME A TAPE FROM GONZALEZ. IN ESSENCE, GONZALEZ BLAMED HIS PROBLEMS AND HIS FAILURE TO OBTAIN A SAFE-CONDUCT OUT OF CHILE ON A CONSPIRACY BETWEEN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, INCLUDING THE POPE, AND FACIST INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS -- AMONG WHICH HE INCLUDED THE ITALIAN CHARGE DE VERGOTTINI. THERE WAS REFERENCE TO HIS STANDING AS A 32ND DEGREE MASON. GONZALEZ ALSO REFERRED TO THREATS AGAINST HIS WIFE BY THE CIA AS THE REASON SHE HAD BEEN UNWILLING TO LEAVE WITHOUT HIM AND TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES LAST YEAR. GONZALEZ IN THE TAPE DID NOT MAKE ANY STATEMENTS THAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED CRITICAL OR DAMAGING BY THE GOC. HE ASKED THAT I SEND A LETTER TO FOREIGN MINISTER CARVAJAL REQUESTING A SAFE-CONDUCT TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY.

4. I ASSURED MR. GONZALEZ' SISTER THAT THE PROBLEM WITH THE GONZALEZ FAMILY IS A HIGH PRIORITY MATTER FOR THIS EMBASSY. BUT I TOLD HER THAT I DID NOT INTEND TO WRITE A LETTER TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER ON THE SUBJECT, EXPLAINING THAT IN MY VIEW IT IS BEST HANDLED IN PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS AT ALL APPROPRIATE LEVELS. I POINTED OUT THE ABSURDITY OF GONZALEZ' FEARS REGARDING THE CIA.

5. COMMENT: I ALSO HAD OCCASION TO DISCUSS THE GONZALEZ PROBLEM WITH THE ITALIAN CHARGE DE VERGOTTINI WHEN HE CALLED UPON ME PRIOR TO THE TWO CONVERSATIONS DESCRIBED ABOVE. DE VERGOTTINI
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TOLD ME AT THAT TIME THAT THE BELGIAN AMBASSADOR, AS THE CURRENT HEAD OF THE EEC GROUP, WAS PLANNING TO PRESENT A DEMARCHE TO CARVAJAL ON THE GONZALEZ PROBLEM. WE ARE TOLD THAT THE DEMARCHE HAS SINCE BEEN PRESENTED AND THAT CARVAJAL REACTED VERY STRONGLY, PRESUMABLY AT LEAST IN PART BECAUSE OF THE UNANIMOUS EEC SUPPORT FOR THE CHILE RESOLUTION IN THE UN. I DO NOT KNOW IF PREVIOUS GOC STATEMENTS THAT THE GONZALEZ MATTER WOULD BE REVIEWED WITH HOPES OF FINDING A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION AT THE END OF THE YEAR (REFTEL) ARE NOW A DEAD LETTER. WE WILL CONTINUE TO EXPRESS OUR STRONG INTEREST.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL ASYLUM
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 16-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SANTIA10068
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770470-1087
Format: TEL
From: SANTIAGO
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771246/aaaabmzc.tel
Line Count: 105
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 68ae4c02-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 77 SANTIAGO 8119
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16-Sep-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 204178
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ITALIAN EMBASSY ASYLEE GONZALEZ
TAGS: SHUM, PINT, IT, CI, (GONZALEZ, RAFAEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/68ae4c02-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009